DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 189 463 CE 026 184

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TITLE Women in Alaska's Labor Force.
INSTITUTION Alaska State Dept. of Labor, Juneau.
SPONS AGENCY Employment and Training Administration (DOL), Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE Apr 80
NOTE 33p.

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Age: Apprenticeships: Career Education: Demography: Displaced Homemakers: *Employed Women: Employment Patterns: Females: Heads of Households: Higher Education: Individual Characteristics: Job Applicants: *Labor Force: *Nontraditional Occupations: *Occupations: Postsecondary Education: Race: Salaries: *Unemployment: Wages
IDENTIFIERS Alaska: Comprehensive Employment and Training Act: Senior Employment Program: Work Incentive Program

ABSTRACT

This 1980 report describes the present status of Alaskan women in the labor force. Extensive use is made of results of the 1976 Survey of Income and Education, an expanded version of the ongoing population survey conducted by the United States Bureau of Census. These topics are covered: demography of Alaskan women, race, age, families, labor force participation, current employment of women in the government and private sectors, occupations, wage and salary information, higher education and apprenticeship training, women and unemployment, characteristics of the unemployed, characteristics of job seekers, inroads to the work force, Work Incentive Program, Comprehensive Employment and Training Act, and Senior Employment Program. Extensive figures and tables are provided. The following facts are reported: 62% of Alaskan women sixteen years ofage and over are in the civilian labor force, since 1950 the proportion of women heads-of-family has doubled to 11%, women comprise over one-third of private sector employment, women constitute a majority of postsecondary students, women are moving into traditional male-dominated disciplines in postsecondary studies, and the number of women enrolled in apprenticeship programs is almost three times the national average (3%). A list of agencies offering employment assistance is appended. (YLB)

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WOMEN IN ALASKA'S LABOR FORCE

Jay S. Hammond, Governor
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In cooperation with the Employment and Training Administration
U. S. Department of Labor

U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
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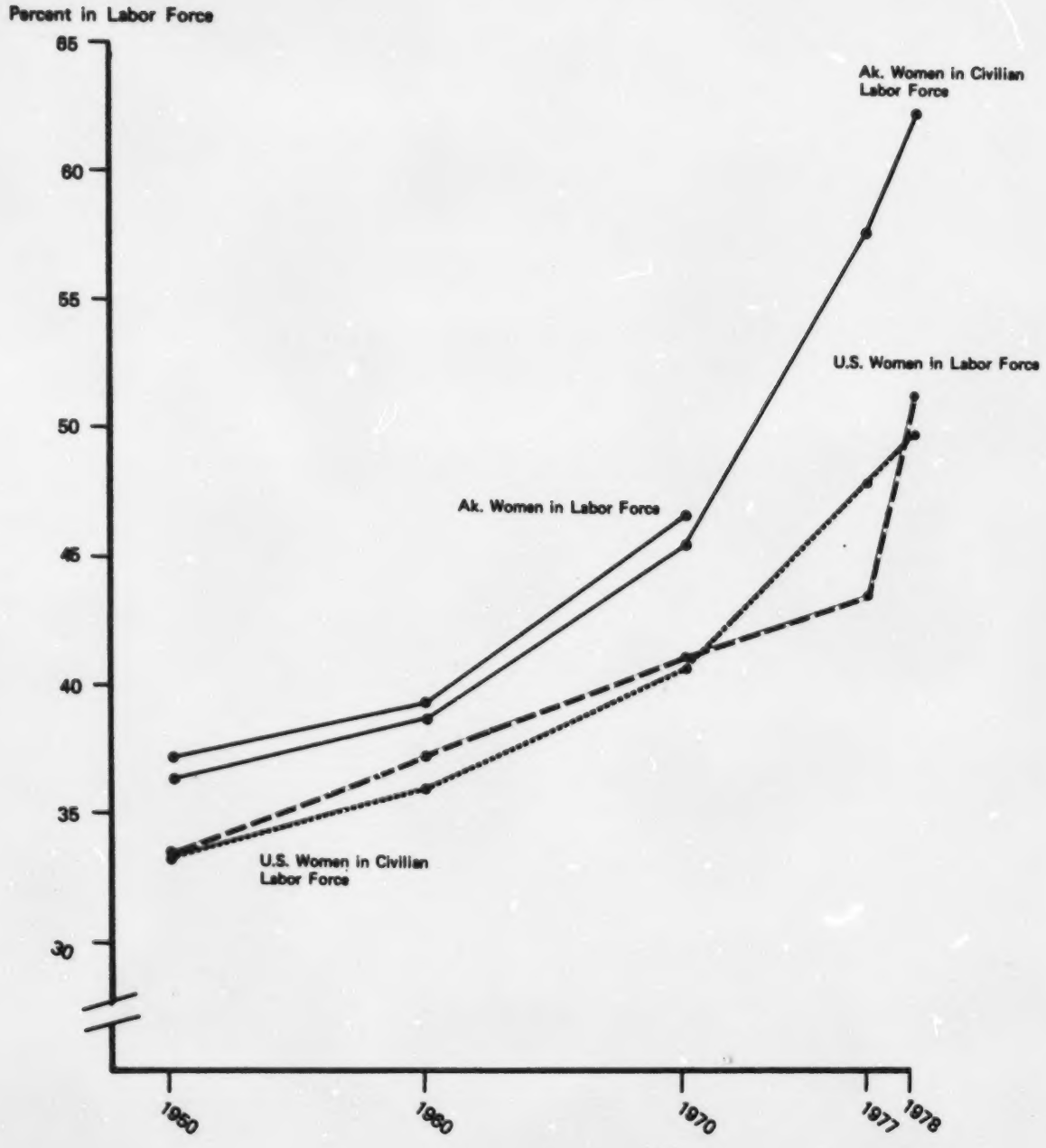
LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION FOR WOMEN 16 YEARS OF AGE AND OVER IN ALASKA AND THE UNITED STATES



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FOREWORD

There is a growing focus on women in the labor force. Administrators, planners, and researchers seek information to identify social problem areas, develop employment and training policies, and judge various affirmative action programs. To partially fill these needs, this report has been written to shed some light upon the status of women in Alaska's labor force.

This report is based upon the best and most current data presently available. However, it is important to take note of data limitations. Results from the 1976 Survey of Income and Education (SIE) are used extensively throughout this report. The SIE was a special and expanded version of the ongoing current population survey conducted by the U.S. Bureau of Census. In Alaska, this special survey was based upon a sample of approximately 7,500 persons. This survey, now three years old, provides data not available elsewhere.

This report does not contain definitive measures of employment discrimination against women. The gathering of specific information which can be used to quantify the extent women encounter discrimination in the labor market will require special surveys and other studies directly addressing such problems.

The Alaska Commission on the Status of Women provided valuable assistance in the preparation of this report. We wish to acknowledge their financial contribution and editorial assistance in preparation of our preliminary draft.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Sixty-two percent of Alaskan women 16 years of age and over are in the civilian labor force.
- The proportion of women who head families has doubled since 1950, from 5.5 percent to 11.0 percent.
- Women comprise over one-third of Alaska's private sector employment.
- Higher proportions of women employees are found in more private industries in Alaska than found nationally.
- Sixty percent of the female work force are employed in clerical or service occupations.
- Women constitute a majority of students enrolled in Alaska's post secondary institutions.
- Women are moving into traditional male dominated disciplines in post secondary studies.
- The number of women enrolled in apprenticeship programs in Alaska is almost three times the national average. However, women represent less than 3 percent of all apprentices nationally.
- The unemployment rate for women in Alaska fell from 8.6 percent in 1978 to 5.7 percent in 1979.

INTRODUCTION

For more than a decade, women have been participating in Alaska's labor market to an increasing degree. The total number of women in paid employment has risen as has the number of women in full time jobs. Legislation in the areas of equal employment opportunity and affirmative action are changing the job climate for women. Despite these changes, however, women continue to exhibit a very different occupational mix than men.

Other factors which are not easily addressed through law may contribute to differentiation of occupations and wages. The level of education which women attain and their choice of academic studies have had a particular bearing on their job market competitiveness and their ability to earn wages comparable to men. Job tenure may also account for part of this difference. Quite often a women's career is interrupted during the child bearing years, but this pattern is becoming less pronounced over time.

Customs and social values may also hinder career development for many women. These factors include stereotyping, promoting traditional roles, inflexible work schedules for working parents, unavailability of affordable daycare for children, the undervaluing of traditional work for women, and fixed attitudes towards socially "unacceptable" career fields for women. Tradition and social values, although difficult to measure or quantify, are powerful influences on the working patterns of women.

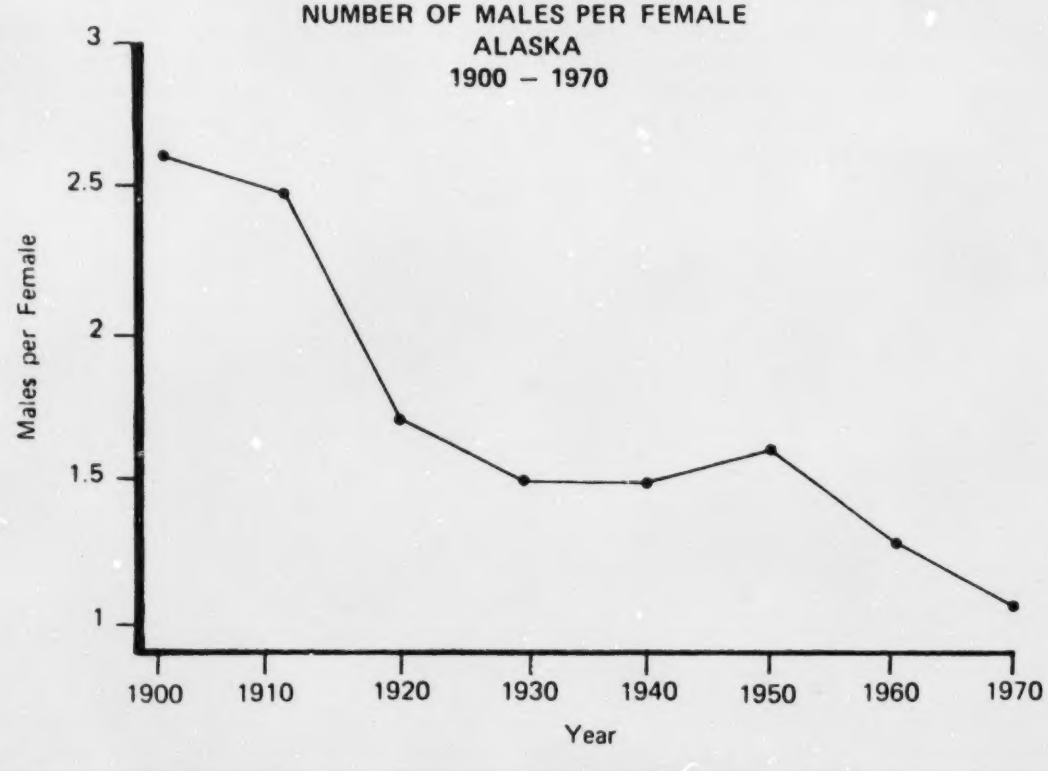
This report describes the present status of Alaskan women in the labor force. No single reason explains why increased representation of women in Alaska's labor force has not caused more profound changes in the mix of jobs held by women. While some of the issues surrounding the differences in occupations and wages are discussed, the lack of data and the complexity of the issues limits the ability of this report to measure their aggregate impact upon the employment patterns of women.

DEMOGRAPHY OF ALASKAN WOMEN

Women comprise nearly one-half of Alaska's population. There were approximately 47 females per hundred population in 1970 as indicated in Figure 1 below.

The Alaska population has a younger age mix than the U.S. population as a whole (see Figure 2). The 1970 median age in Alaska was 23 (slightly younger for women at 22). The median age of the United States was 29. Alaska's youthfulness is not solely the result of high birth rates. Migration has been the major shaper of Alaska's population profile. Significant periods of inmigration have accompanied major economic booms within the state. The Klondike Gold Rush of 1897, construction of the Alcan Highway in 1942, the North Slope oil lease auction of 1969, and the construction of the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline in 1974 were each accompanied by elevated growth rates.

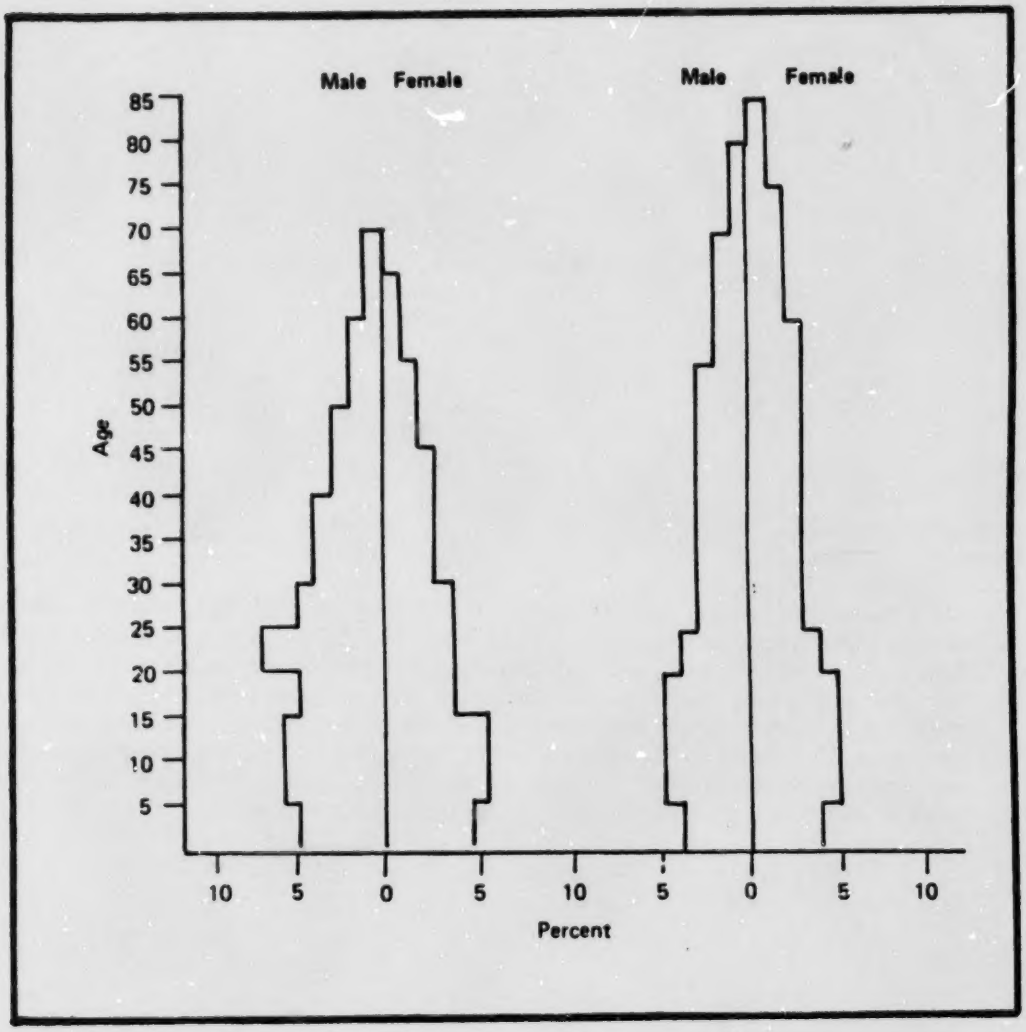
FIGURE 1
NUMBER OF MALES PER FEMALE
ALASKA
1900 – 1970



Source: Census Data

FIGURE 2

ALASKA 1970 UNITED STATES 1970



Source: Census Data.

RACE

The racial composition of Alaskan women has been relatively unchanged and (except for youth) in balance with the racial composition of men since 1970. According to the 1976 Survey of Income and Education the composition is approximately:

TABLE 1

Racial Characteristics of Alaska and the United States

Alaska*			United States**		
Race	% Male	% Female	Race	% Male	% Female
White	80	79	White	89	88
Other-Primarily Alaska Native	15	17	Black & Other	11	12
Black	5	4			

* 1976 Survey of Income and Education; U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census hereafter referred to as the 1976 SIE. This survey was conducted in March, 1976 – a pipeline year – and was based upon a sample size of 7,378 non-military and non-institutionalized Alaskans who were 15 years and older; therefore, survey results may distort certain characteristics of the population. Each person surveyed counts as 50 persons in the final results. The survey results may show urban bias and other sampling errors. In spite of its limitations, the 1976 SIE is the most current and thorough data of this type available on Alaska.

** U. S. Working Women: A Databook; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics 1977, page 41.

AGE

With the exclusion of military, females in Alaska have a similar age distribution to that of males as Table 2 illustrates.

TABLE 2

Age, Race, and Sex of Alaskans – 1978[1/]

Age Range	1978 Total Population	Total Female	Women By Race and Age (Vertical Percent)* White	Black	Other**	Men By Race and Age (Vertical Percent)* White	Black	Other**
Under 16 yrs.	136,100	64,899	30%	40%	40%	31	40	39
16–24 yrs.	83,200	38,800	19	20	20	19	21	22
25–44 yrs.	128,100	62,200	33	31	23	33	31	22
45–64 yrs.	58,500	27,200	14	7	11	15	7	12
65+ yrs.	10,500	5,800	3	1	5	2	1	4
TOTAL	416,400	198,800						

1/ Source: Selected Socioeconomic Indicators from the 1976 Survey of Income and Education, U.S. Department of Labor, Table 1. (Numbers have been factored to reflect the Alaska Department of Labor's 1978 total population estimate of 416,400).

* May not total 100% due to rounding.

** Other – approximately 85% Alaska Native.

FAMILIES

In 1976, there were approximately 82,000 families in Alaska, an increase of 23 percent since 1970. Eleven percent of these were headed by women. Although less than the national rate of 13 percent, it is over twice the 1970 rate for Alaska. Another notable increase was seen in families with husband and wife in the labor force. An increase of 47 percent or 12,470 families were added to the 1970 figures.1/

The percentage of Alaskan families in poverty decreased between 1970 and 1976 according to the Survey of Income and Education. Only five percent of all families are considered below federally established poverty guidelines as compared to 10 percent in 1970. While these figures do not indicate the proportion in poverty by family group and may be understated due to the escalated cost of living present during the Alaskan oil pipeline boom in 1976, they are of interest in discussing the economic situation of women who head families. Median incomes for women who head families rose 68 percent from 1970 to 1976. The median income in 1976 was $8,944.00 for women who head families and $21,792 for men who head families (wife not in paid labor force).2/

Yet, according to Alaska Job Service records, over 2,500 women, or 27 percent of all women who head households (based upon 1976 data), who had applied for employment services from October 1978 through July 1979 were eligible for the Work Incentive Program (WIN). To be eligible for WIN, which is a work program, a person must be an AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children) recipient. Not all low income women who head families would be captured under this program, either. Many women find employment outside of Job Service and have not chosen to apply or do not qualify for welfare benefits. Using a conservative assumption that the same proportion of families headed by women are economically disadvantaged today as there were in 1970, then approximately 3,330 families headed by women (37 percent) are still below poverty guidelines.3/

1/ Money Income and Poverty Status in 1975 of Families and Persons in the United States and the West Region, by Divisions and States (SIE, 1976) U.S. Bureau of the Census, Page 7, 169.

2/ Ibid and U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of the Population: Detailed Characteristics of Alaska, page 391, Table 198.

3/ U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of the Population: Detailed Characteristics of Alaska, p. 429, Table 209.

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION

The economic influence of women in the United States and Alaska is indicated by their continued growth in the labor force. By 1978, 42 million women were in the nations' labor force or about 41 percent of the country's entire labor force.[4/] In Alaska, 43 percent of the state's civilian labor force were women.[5/] This is nearly double the percentage of 1950 and is 12 percent greater than U.S. women in the civilian labor force for 1978 (see inside cover for graph).

The portion of Alaska's female population involved in the labor force has been greater than the U.S. civilian female labor force population since prior to 1950. However, the most notable gains have been recorded in the past decade. Social change in attitudes accounts for a great deal of the rise. Yet, the development of cash economies in many rural parts of Alaska through the creation of public service jobs and the influence of the Alaska oil pipeline has also expanded the number of women appearing in Alaska's labor force.

Participation in the labor force is the highest among those who need to work (see Figure 3). Nearly 80 percent of all divorced Alaskan women 16 years of age and older are in the labor force. Most women who head families are found in this category. Alaska's participation rates for divorced women exceeds the national rate by almost 10 percent. Self supporting single women have the next highest rate of participation, 49.3 percent. The fastest growth in participation, however, are married women (with spouse present). This trend is present nationwide as well.

	U.S.				Alaska	
	1950	1960	1970	1976	1960	1970
Single	46.3	44.1	53.0	58.9	45.2	49.3
Married, Spouse Present	21.6	30.5	40.8	45.0	36.5	43.8
Married, Spouse Absent	46.6	51.8	52.1	57.3	49.9	48.5
Divorced		71.6	71.5	71.4	80.4	79.8
Widowed	32.6	29.8	26.4	22.3	38.9	39.3

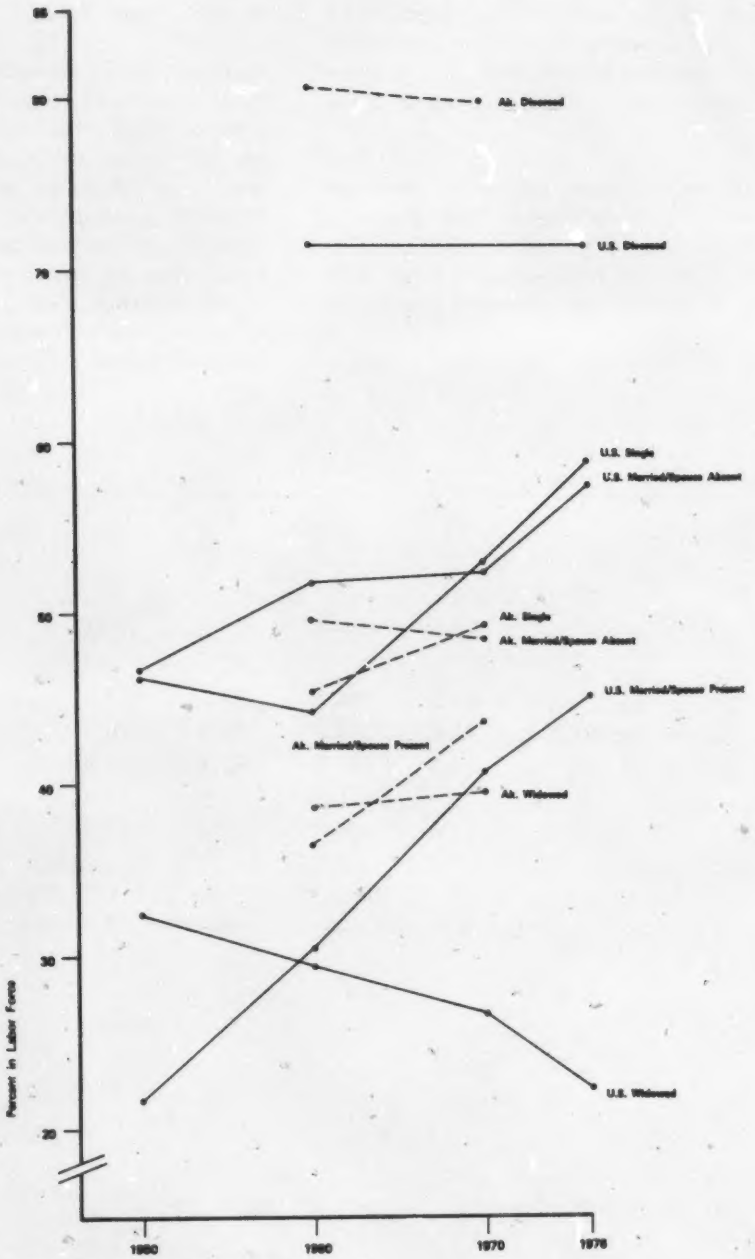
Source: U.S. Working Women: A Databook 1977, page 519. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of the Population and Detailed Characteristics of Alaska, 1960, p. 1–499 and 1970 p. 1–688.

4/ Employment and Training Report of the President, 1979.

5/ Ibid. U.S. Bureau of Census, Census of the Population.

FIGURE 3

LABOR FORCE PARTICIPATION RATES OF WOMEN BY MARITAL STATUS FOR ALASKA AND THE UNITED STATES



Sources: U. S. Working Women: A Databook, 1977, p. 518.
U.S. Bureau of the Census, Census of the Population, and Detailed Characteristics of Alaska, 1960, pp. 1-469 and 1970, pp. 1-688.

CURRENT EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN

Total non-agricultural wage and salary employment figures for Alaska are based upon a survey conducted by the Alaska Department of Labor. Data is gathered for the public and private sector. This survey is designed to produce current estimates of employment by industry.

GOVERNMENT SECTOR

Presently, the government segment of the survey does not allow for reliable estimates of employment by sex. However, employment statistics for classified service in state government shows that approximately 52 percent of state employees are female. U.S. employment data shows that nationally approximately 46 percent of all government (state, local, and federal) employees are women.

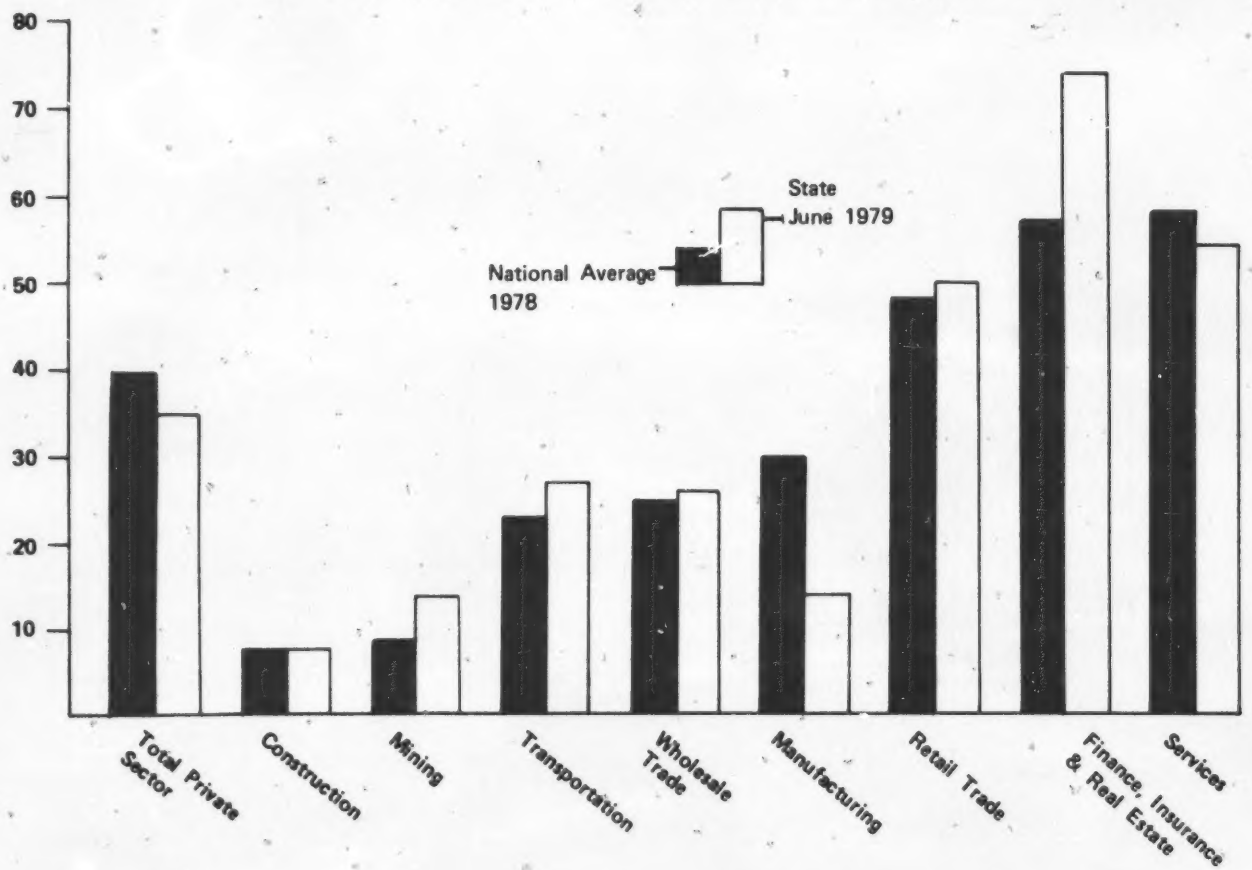
PRIVATE SECTOR

Women comprise over one-third of Alaska's private sector employment. Employment figures for June 1979 reveal that of the 113,000 people employed in private industry, 40,000 (35%) were women. Employment figures from the month of June for the years 1974 to 1977 show roughly the same proportion of women employed. Thus, it appears that the proportion of women *employed* in Alaska's private sector has remained unchanged during the last six years.

Most private industries in Alaska exhibit higher ratios of women employees than found nationally. Only two U.S. industry groups exceed the Alaska ratios of females to males. Figure 4 illustrates the percent of women in Alaska's private nonagricultural industries in comparison to the national levels. Three

FIGURE 4

PERCENT OF WOMEN EMPLOYED IN PRIVATE NONAG. INDUSTRIES



Source: National Data. Employment and Earning, March 1979, Tables B2 and B3, State Data. BLS 790 Survey Data, June 1979.

industry groups exhibit high ratios of women employed both nationally and in Alaska. These are retail trade; services; and finance, insurance and real estate. These industries traditionally have a greater representation of female employees. In the other industries women constitute a minority. However, in Alaska most major industries generally exhibit a higher proportion of women than seen nationwide.

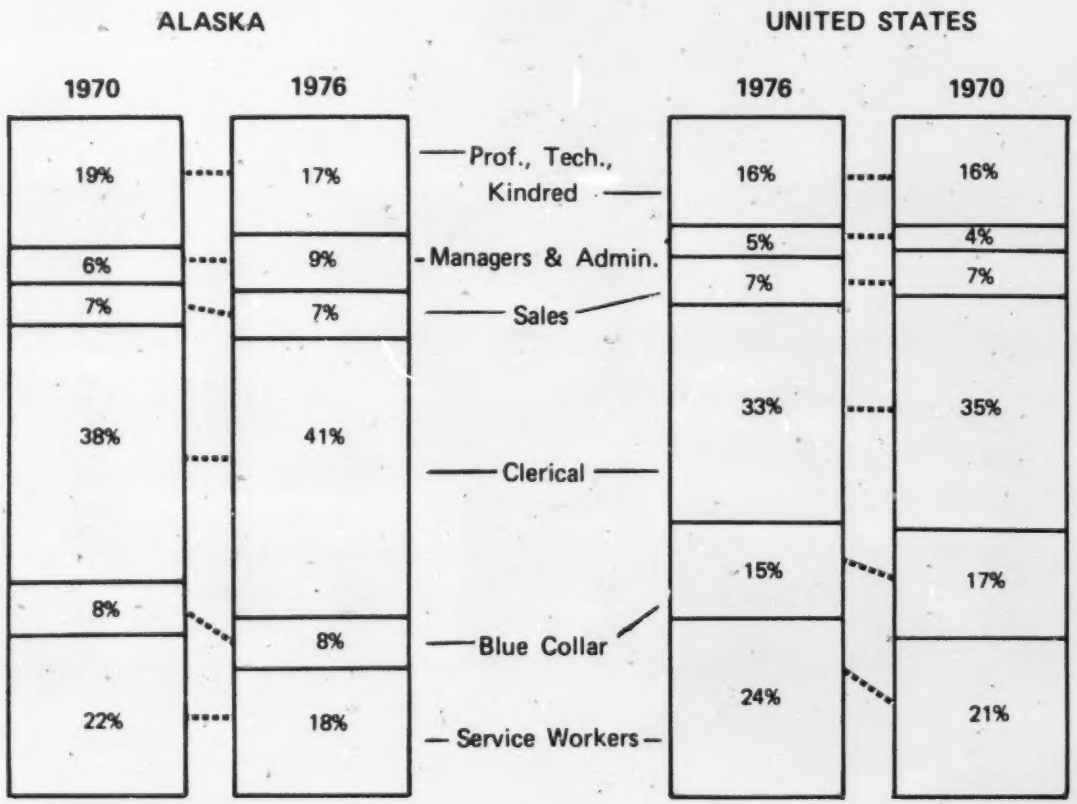
The great disparity between Alaska and the nation in the employment of women in manufacturing is due primarily to differences in size and composition of the industry. Manufacturing is the largest industry in the U.S. (24% of all employment in 1978). In Alaska it is one of the smaller industries (approximately 7% of total statewide employment in 1978). Manufacturing in Alaska consists basically of seasonal activities in logging and wood products, and seafood processing. Most women in manufacturing are engaged in seafood processing. Logging etc., has a predominantly male employment profile. When logging and related processing are active, total manufacturing will show a lower percent of women than when seafood processing alone is active. It is mainly the influence of the large and diverse U.S. manufacturing industry that causes the total U.S. percentage of women employees to be greater than Alaska's. Most notable is the substantial utilization of women workers in manufacturing industries which do not exist in Alaska (e.g. textiles, electronics, etc.).

OCCUPATIONS

Despite increases in women's labor force participation rates, historical employment patterns in "traditional jobs" still persist to a large extent. As Figure 5

FIGURE 5

OCCUPATIONAL PROFILE OF WOMEN
U. S. AND ALASKA, 1970 AND 1976



Sources: SIE, 1976; U. S. Population Census, 1970, Detailed Characteristics of Alaska, Table 170; U. S. Population Census, 1970, U. S. Summary

illustrates, women are strongly represented in clerical and service occupations both in Alaska and the nation as a whole. These two occupations account for nearly 60 percent of the total female work force at both state and national levels. In part, this reflects a recent rapid movement of women into entry level jobs. In addition, these have been the fastest growing occupations in recent decades and have thus absorbed much of the increasing numbers of women entering or re-entering the labor force.

Over 60 percent of women who hold professional positions in Alaska are in the traditional fields of nursing, health care, and teaching (predominated by elementary teachers). Seventeen percent of the women in Alaska's work force are found in professional, technical and kindred occupations, and 9 percent as managers and administrators.6/

During the past five years Alaska State Government has experienced little change in the ratio of men to women by occupation (see Figures 6 and 7). Women are still predominate in the traditional occupations (clerical, teaching and librarianship, etc.). A high proportion of state government jobs are clerical; a job class which has served as an inroad for women into the job market. While some changes have occurred in women's participation in non-traditional occupations, women have made only minor advancements in professional, skilled/craft and service/maintenance occupations. The significant point to be made is that sex segregation among professional and blue collar occupations continues to exist despite affirmative action programs and employment anti-discrimination laws.

Why does occupational segregation continue? National studies reveal that the choice of educational pursuit significantly influences an individual's earning ability. Also job tenure is a factor in promotion and seniority.7/ But these are only partial explanations.

Currently, the Office of Equal Opportunity is exploring possible barriers to employment and promotion in Alaska State Government. This work will entail a study of applicants and people who are presently working. Such areas as testing, experience, education, and the application process will be explored. Such analysis may provide an understanding of why affirmative action practices by themselves have not been totally effective in dealing with a very old problem.

WAGE AND SALARY INFORMATION

Wage and salary information by occupation for Alaskan women is difficult to obtain through present data sources. The best available data describes the pay range and salary structure of women in state government. State government comprises 9 percent of the total non-agricultural employment in Alaska and women comprise about half of all state workers. Wage differentials in a highly structured system such as state government are tied primarily to occupational differences. The fact that the 1979 median monthly salary for male general government employees was $2,031, while females made only about 66 percent of that amount ($1,339), can be partially explained by referring back to the occupational diagram for Alaska state government employees (Figure 7). Women are predominantly located in the lower paying clerical level occupations. This is especially true in the modal pay range (the most often occurring) which is pay range 8 or $1,105 per month for women. Conversely, most men are found in occupations with some professional orientation and therefore, receive higher monthly salaries (modal pay range 18 with a $2,200 per month salary). Keep in mind that this merely describes the situation as it appears now. We do not know the degree to which or the reason why women (or men) are underutilized. The substantial occupational differences that exist between men and women do imply inequalities in employment opportunities.

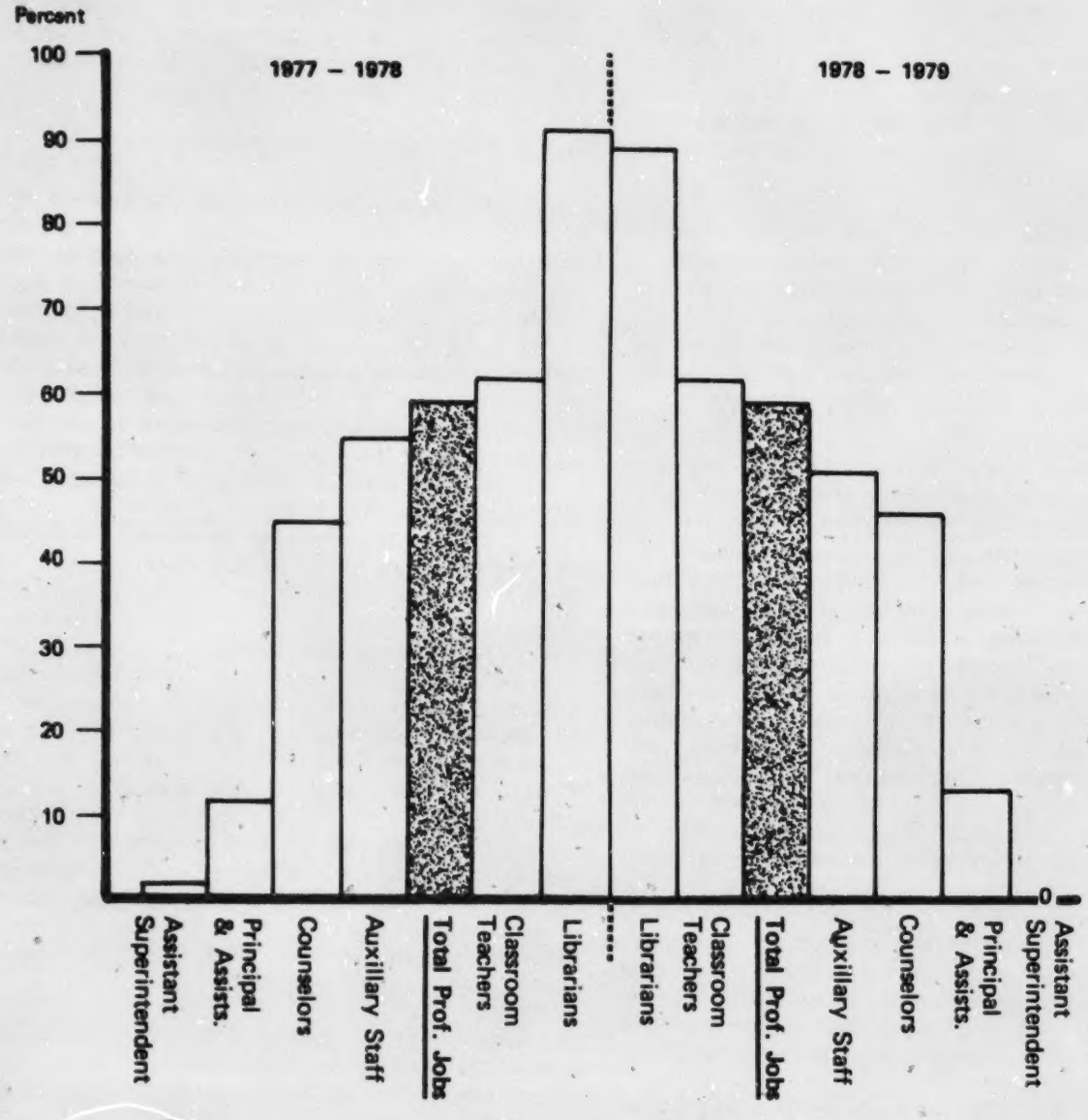
To further examine income differentials, additional knowledge regarding occupations, skill and educational levels are needed by salary range in all industries. Without such information it is difficult to ascertain the influence each factor may have upon the income inequalities women experience.

6/ Selected Socio-economic Indicators from the 1976 Survey of Income and Education, U.S. Department of Labor.

7/ Monthly Labor Review, August 1979, U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics "Weekly and Hourly Earnings of 1967–78" Page 35.

FIGURE 6

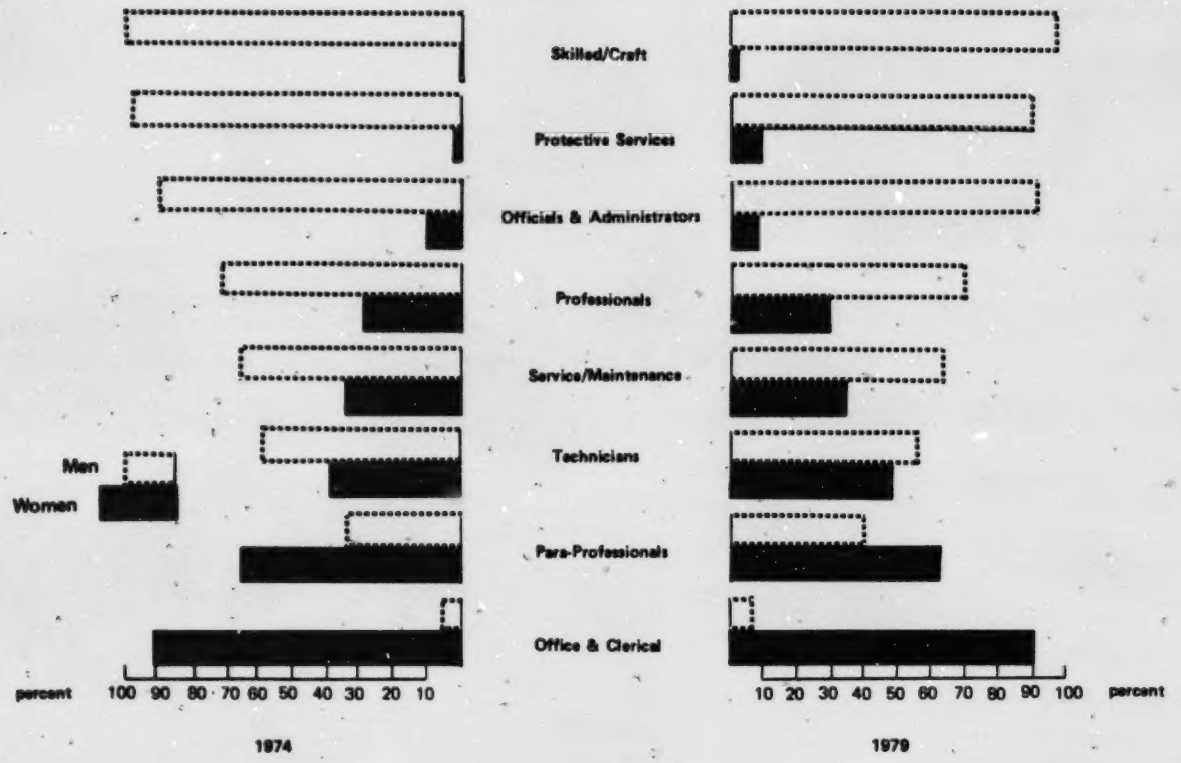
DISTRIBUTION OF PROFESSIONAL WOMEN
EMPLOYED IN ELEMENTARY & SECONDARY SCHOOLS
ALASKA 1977 THROUGH 1979



Source: Alaska Department of Education,
Loraine Robinson, September 1979

FIGURE 7

STATE OF ALASKA
FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION
FOR WOMEN AND MEN
SELECTED YEARS 1974 AND 1979



Source: EEO, State of Alaska, Kay Hogan, August 1979. A Preliminary Study of the Status of Women in Alaska, 1977.

HIGHER EDUCATION AND APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

HIGHER EDUCATION

Women now constitute a majority of the students enrolled in Alaska's post secondary academic institutions. In the Preliminary Study: The Status of Women in Alaska, it was reported that the proportion of women students enrolled at the University of Alaska had risen from 40 percent to roughly 50 percent from 1969 to 1975. Enrollment data for fall 1978 (Table 3) from Alaska's institutions of higher education shows that women accounted for nearly 55 percent of all students; a further increase since 1975. It appears that women are more aggressively pursuing formal education which should improve their competitive position in the labor market in future years.

TABLE 3
WOMEN ENROLLED IN ALASKA'S HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS
FALL 1978

	FULL TIME			PART TIME		
	MALE	FEMALE	PERCENT FEMALE	MALE	FEMALE	PERCENT FEMALE
TOTAL	3173	3041	48.9	9114	11671	56.2
UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA	3058	2943	49.0	9038	11467	55.9
ANCHORAGE	495	606	55.0	921	1507	62.1
FAIRBANKS	1056	817	43.6	1246	1195	49.0
SOUTHEAST	28	25	47.2	214	292	57.7
ANCHORAGE C.C.	981	1002	50.5	3488	3602	50.8
JUNEAU-DOUGLAS C.C.	76	43	36.1	607	932	60.6
KENAI PENINSULA C.C.	79	68	46.3	555	784	58.6
KETCHIKAN C.C.	14	23	62.2	242	390	61.7
KODIAK C.C.	4	7	63.6	130	390	75.0
KOTZEBUE C.C.	2	1	33.3	46	122	72.6
KUSKOKWIM C.C.	23	46	66.7	252	356	58.6
MATANUSKA-SUSITNA C.C.	46	18	28.1	127	188	59.7
NORTHWEST C.C.	6	16	72.7	86	151	63.7
PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND C.C.	4	5	55.6	162	246	60.3
SITKA C.C.	5	11	68.8	176	235	57.2
TANANA VALLEY C.C.	239	255	51.6	786	1077	57.8
PRIVATE INSTITUTIONS	115	98	46.0	76	204	72.8
ALASKA BIBLE COLLEGE	5	9	64.3	8	14	63.6
ALASKA PACIFIC UNIVERSITY	20	14	41.2	18	68	79.1
INUPIAT UNIVERSITY OF THE ARCTIC	0	0	0	15	18	54.5
SHELDON JACKSON COLLEGE	90	75	45.5	35	104	74.8

SOURCE: ALASKA COMMISSION ON POST SECONDARY EDUCATION. HEGIS REPORTS

The fields of study which women are completing in Alaska shows movement into traditionally male dominated disciplines. Table 4 presents the degrees awarded in the 1977–1978 academic year by discipline. Traditional female fields of study such as education, arts, health, and the humanities continue to show a large percentage of the degrees awarded to women. Notable shifts, however, are occurring in the types of studies that women are undertaking. Over half of the undergraduate degrees awarded in business, communications, mathematics, and physical sciences were earned by women. In most graduate degree programs, men still outnumbered women. Although the enrollment of women in Alaska's academic institutions has increased, and recently more undergraduate degrees were awarded to women than men, the majority of women are still found in traditional female fields. Thus, the shift of women into other fields is occurring but at a slow rate.

TABLE 4
DEGREES AWARDED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA
SENIOR COLLEGES BETWEEN JULY 1977 AND JUNE 1978

	UNDERGRADUATE			GRADUATE		
DISCIPLINE GROUP	MALES	FEMALES	PERCENT FEMALE	MALES	FEMALES	PERCENT FEMALE
TOTAL	157	194	55.3	91	75	45.2
AGRICULTURE & NATURAL RESOURCES	11	1	8.3	6	1	14.3
AREA STUDIES	1	0	0	0	0	0
BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES	19	14	42.4	5	1	16.7
BUSINESS & MANAGEMENT	14	19	57.6	13	1	7.1
COMMUNICATIONS	3	5	62.5	0	0	0
COMPUTER & INFORMATION SCIENCES	0	1	100.0	0	0	0
EDUCATION	16	37	69.8	25	63	71.6
ENGINEERING	30	6	16.6	14	0	0
FINE & APPLIED ARTS	6	8	57.1	0	0	0
FOREIGN LANGUAGES	0	3	100.0	0	0	0
HEALTH PROFESSIONS	1	22	95.7	0	0	0
HOME ECONOMICS	0	1	100.0	0	0	0
LETTERS	5	7	58.3	2	2	50.0
MATHEMATICS	3	4	57.1	0	0	0
PHYSICAL SCIENCES	4	5	55.6	6	2	25.0
PSYCHOLOGY	14	22	61.1	0	2	100.0
PUBLIC AFFAIRS & SERVICES	0	0	0	15	1	6.3
SOCIAL SCIENCES	29	35	54.7	5	2	28.6
INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES	1	4	80.0	0	0	0

SOURCE: ALASKA COMMISSION ON POST SECONDARY EDUCATION. HEGIS REPORTS

TABLE 4-B
ASSOCIATE DEGREES AWARDED BY THE ANCHORAGE
COMMUNITY COLLEGE BETWEEN JULY 1977 AND JUNE 1978

CURRICULUM AREA	MALES	FEMALES	PERCENT FEMALE
TOTAL	113	121	51.7
ARTS & SCIENCE, GENERAL	27	34	55.7
DATA PROCESSING TECHNOLOGIES	1	3	75.0
HEALTH SERVICES & PARAMEDICAL	6	41	87.2
MECHANICAL & ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGIES	37	6	14.0
NATURAL SCIENCE TECHNOLOGIES	7	9	56.3
BUSINESS & COMMERCE TECHNOLOGIES	20	26	56.5
PUBLIC SERVICE RELATED TECHNOLOGIES	15	2	11.8

NOTE: ANCHORAGE C.C. ACCOUNTED FOR 234 OF 352 (66 PERCENT) ASSOCIATE DEGREES AWARDED IN THE UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA SYSTEM.

SOURCE: ALASKA COMMISSION ON POST SECONDARY EDUCATION. HEGIS REPORT

APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING

Another vehicle used to prepare for entry into the skilled and semi-skilled labor force is apprenticeship training. Although few women participate in apprenticeship training, such training often provides the only means of entry into specific trades. The fraction of women in Alaska enrolled in apprenticeship programs is small, though nearly three times the national average. Data on women in apprenticeship training programs is found in Table 5. Six percent of Alaskan apprentices are women. Women constitute nearly half the total number enrolled in only two occupational groups: cooks and bakers, and drafters. On a national basis less than three percent of apprentices are women. Due to high levels of unemployment in the construction trades opportunities for apprenticeship training in Alaska is currently limited. This could result in a temporary setback for trainees but will likely not be a long term problem.

In order to assist women in entering non-traditional occupations the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training has established goals for the participation of women in apprenticeship programs. Program managers are mandated to strive for a 20 percent increase *per year* in the rate of participation by women.

During the period January to June 1978, 138 persons completed apprenticeship programs. Only one woman finished during this period, but prior to the trans-Alaska pipeline project there were no women in apprenticeship programs in Alaska. Since it takes three to five years (depending on the craft) to complete such training, increasing numbers of women will be forthcoming from such programs. In many trade and craft occupations the successful completion of apprenticeship is needed to enter the job market at a qualified journeyman level. The low number of women enrolled in and finishing apprenticeship programs would mean that few women will enter these occupations in the immediate future.

TABLE 5
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM ENROLLMENT
ALASKA - JUNE 1978

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP	TOTAL ENROLLED	FEMALES ENROLLED	PERCENT FEMALE	PERCENT FEMALE NATIONALLY
TOTAL	1575	98	6.2	2.6
AIR CONDITIONING & REFRIGERATION MECHANICS	*	*	*	.6
AIRCRAFT MECHANICS	2	0	0	6.0
AUTO & RELATED MECHANICS	32	0	0	.6
AUTO & RELATED BODY REPAIRERS	5	0	0	.4
BARBERS & BEAUTICIANS	*	*	*	59.6
BOILERMAKERS	17	1	5.9	.7
BOOKBINDERS & BINDERY WORKERS	*	*	*	11.9
BRICKLAYER, STONE & TILE SETTERS	6	0	0	.7
BUTCHERS & MEAT CUTTERS	2	0	0	8.6
CABINETMAKERS, WOOD MACHINISTS	*	*	*	2.2
CAR REPAIRERS	6	0	0	2.3
CARPENTERS	240	4	1.7	1.5
CEMENT MASONS	10	0	0	1.7
COMPOSITERS	1	0	0	14.5
COOKS & BAKERS	12	5	41.7	13.9
DRAFTERS	4	2	50.0	9.0
ELECTRICAL WORKERS, NEC	3	0	0	2.8
ELECTRICIANS	272	15	5.5	1.3
ELECTRONIC TECHNICIANS	3	0	0	10.8
FLOOR COVERERS	9	2	22.2	.7
GLAZIERS	17	0	0	.3
INDUSTRIAL TECHNICIANS	0	0	0	11.2
INSULATION WORKERS	29	5	17.2	1.3
LATHERS	0	0	0	.5
LINE ERECTORS, LIGHT & POWER	121	15	12.4	2.2
LITHOGRAPHERS, PHOTOENGRAVERS	1	0	0	5.0
MACHINE SET-UP & OPERATORS	*	*	*	1.5
MACHINISTS	8	0	0	2.3
MAINTENANCE MECHANICS	1	0	0	4.2
MECHANICS & REPAIRERS, NEC	6	0	0	1.6
MEDICAL & DENTAL TECHNICIANS	2	0	0	13.7
MILLWRIGHTS	13	0	0	1.7
MOLDERS & COPEMAKERS	*	*	*	1.9
OFFICE MACHINE SERVICERS	14	1	7.1	2.5
OPERATING ENGINEERS	113	5	4.4	2.1
OPTICAL WORKERS	2	0	0	14.2
ORNAMENTAL IRONWORKERS	*	*	*	0
PAINTERS	59	10	16.9	3.5
PATTERNMAKERS	*	*	*	1.9
PIPEFITTERS	369	26	7.0	2.0

TABLE 5
APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM ENROLLMENT
ALASKA - JUNE 1978
(CONTINUED)

OCCUPATIONAL GROUP	TOTAL ENROLLED	FEMALES ENROLLED	PERCENT FEMALE	PERCENT FEMALE NATIONALLY
PIPEFITTERS - STEAMFITTERS	*	*	*	.3
PLASTERERS	0	0	0	1.7
PLUMBERS	6	0	0	.4
PRESS OPERATORS	0	0	0	2.2
PRINTING & PUBLISHING WORKERS	0	0	0	5.6
RADIO & TV REPAIRERS	5	0	0	1.5
ROOFERS	29	0	0	.5
SHEET METAL WORKERS	32	2	6.3	.9
SPRINKLER FITTERS	23	0	0	.1
STATIONARY ENGINEERS	*	*	*	2.2
STRUCTURAL STEEL WORKERS	64	4	6.3	.3
TAPERS & DRY WALL INSTALLERS	1	0	0	2.7
TOOLMAKERS & DIEMAKERS	*	*	*	2.5
MISCELLANEOUS TRADES, NEC	36	1	2.8	6.5

* = NO TRAINING PROGRAM FOR THIS GROUP IN ALASKA

NEC = NOT ELSEWHERE CLASSIFIED

SOURCE: U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR, BUREAU OF APPRENTICESHIP AND TRAINING. DATA PROVIDED BY ANCHORAGE, ALASKA OFFICE.

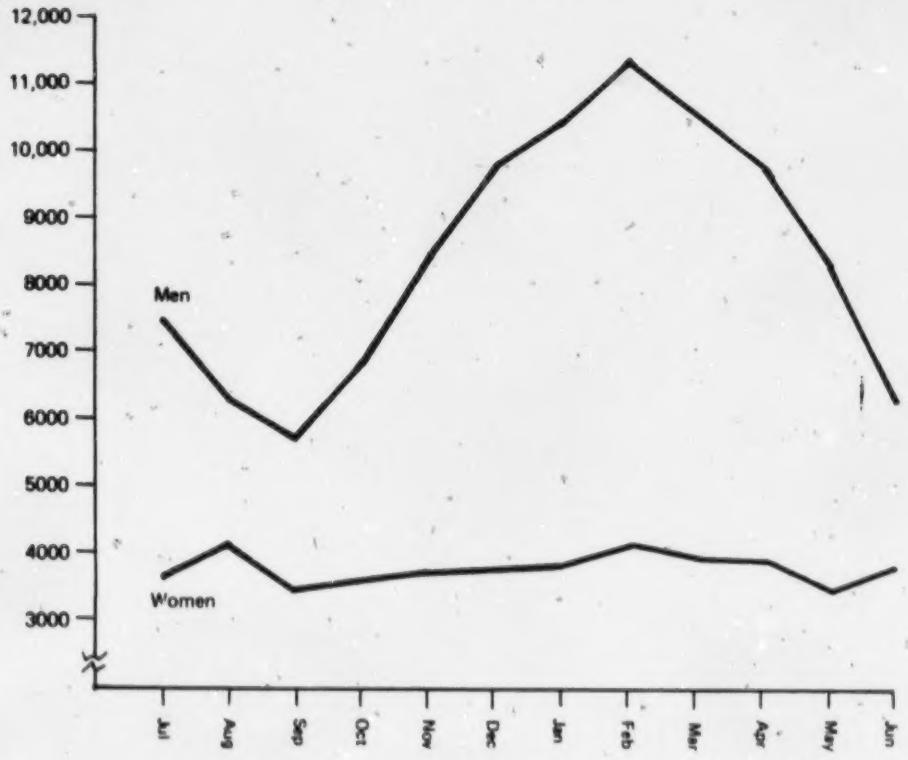
WOMEN AND UNEMPLOYMENT

Total unemployment averaged 8.9 percent of Alaska's labor force in 1979 down from 11.0 percent in 1978. The unemployment rate for women in Alaska fell from 8.6 percent in 1978 to 5.7 percent in 1979. This compares favorably with the national unemployment rate for women which was also 5.7 percent in 1979.[8/]

The level of unemployment for women in Alaska remains stable throughout the year as compared to the level for men which fluctuates widely. Due to the seasonal nature of Alaska's economy, the state's unemployment rate is high and varies considerably throughout the year. Figure 8 contrasts the number of unemployment claims filed by men and women during a year. During the period July 1978 to June 1979, almost one third of the weekly claims were filed by women. Figure 8 clearly shows that the *number of claims* filed by men fluctuated widely, whereas for women the numbers were fairly stable. Thus, women tend to be less subjected to seasonally high periods of unemployment. Much of this difference stems from women's substantial participation in the more stable industries and occupations.

FIGURE 8

WEEKLY CLAIMS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS STATEWIDE JULY 1978 TO JUNE 1979



Source: Alaska Department of Labor, ES 203 Reports.

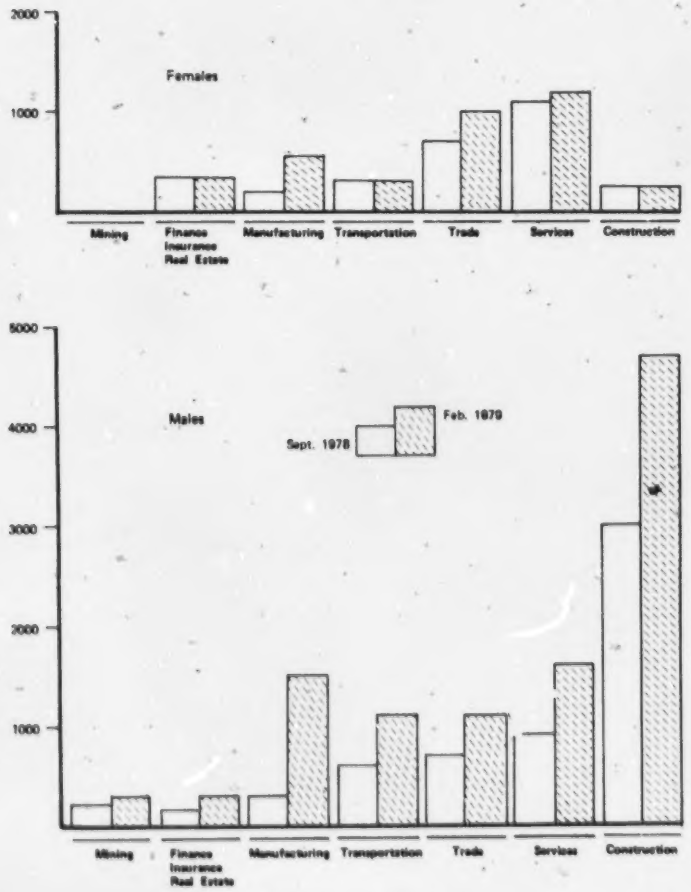
8/ U. S. Department of Labor Press Release Number 80-92 derived from the Current Population Survey.

Figure 9 compares the number of claims filed *by industry* during September 1978 and February 1977 for both men and women. Figure 10 makes the same comparison by occupation. The months of September and February were chosen because at these times the number of claims filed were at their respectively low and high points. A significant difference in number of claims filed during these two months shows the effects of seasonality.

Figure 9 shows that the greatest difference in number of claims filed in September and February occurred in construction and manufacturing (mostly for male claimants). As noted previously, these industries have low percentages of women employees. Obviously, the male dominated industries (construction, mining, etc.) and related occupations experience the highest levels of seasonal unemployment. In terms of occupational data, most claims filed were from persons previously engaged in structural work. Men predominate this occupational group.

FIGURE 9

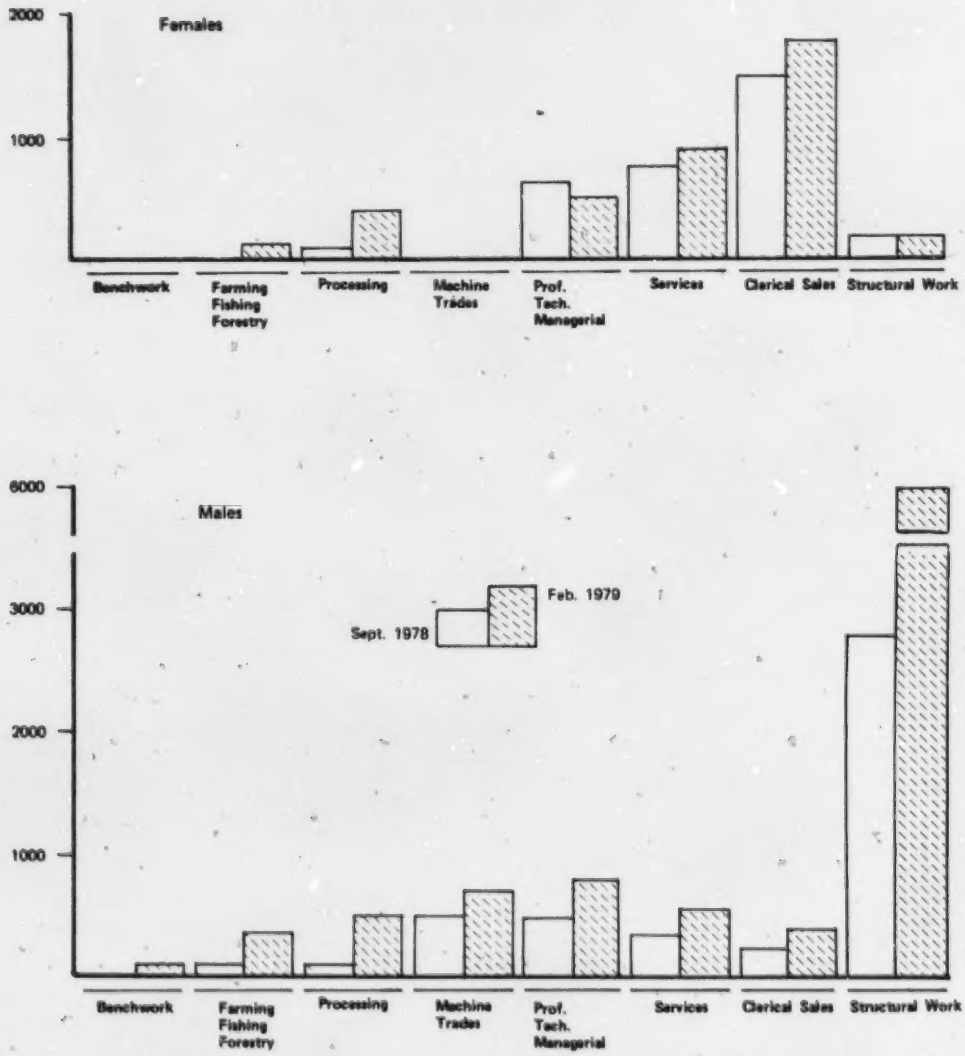
WEEKLY CLAIMS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS BY INDUSTRY FOR MALES AND FEMALES SEPTEMBER 1978 AND FEBRUARY 1979



Source: Alaska Department of Labor ES 203 Reports.

FIGURE 10

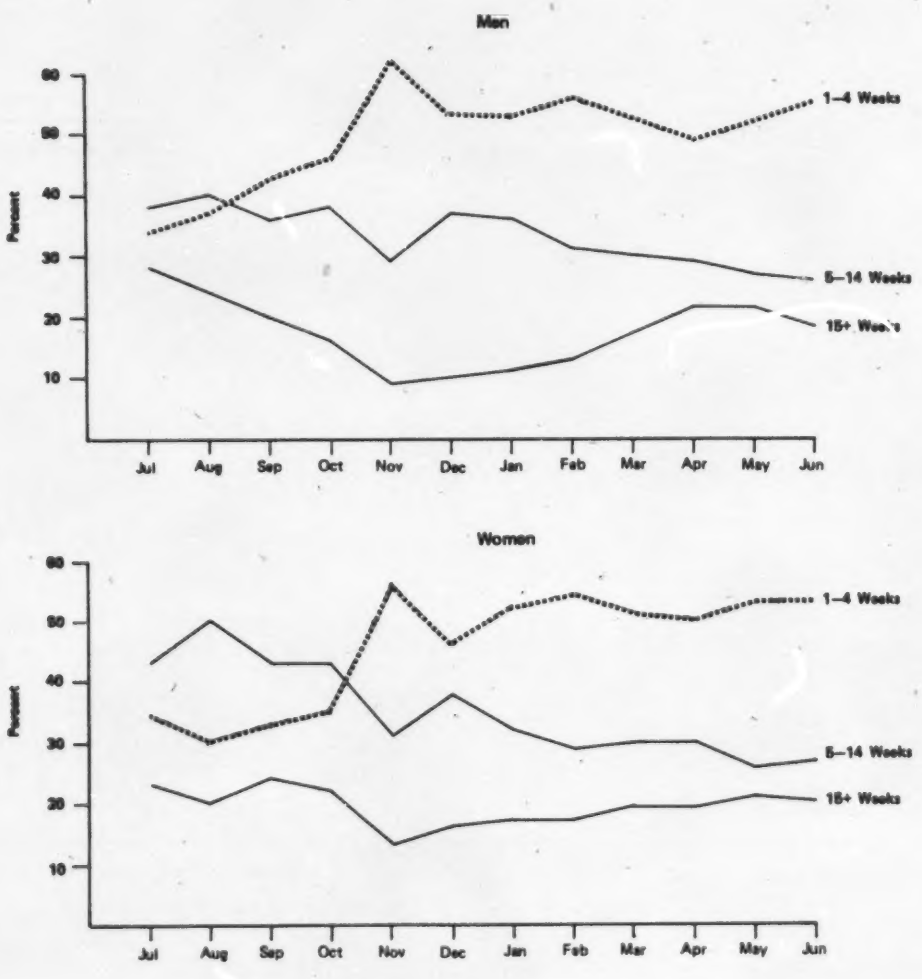
WEEKLY CLAIMS FOR UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE BENEFITS BY OCCUPATION OF CLAIMANTS FOR MALES AND FEMALES SEPTEMBER 1978 AND FEBRUARY 1979



Source: Alaska Department of Labor ES 203 Reports.

The level of unemployment differs for men and women but not the duration of unemployment. Figure 11 illustrates the duration of unemployment for both groups from July 1978 to June 1979. Most men and women had periods of unemployment lasting 1 to 4 weeks. Fewer people had durations of 15 or more weeks.

FIGURE 11
UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE CLAIM DURATION
JULY 1978 TO JUNE 1979



Source: Alaska Department of Labor ES 203 Reports.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE UNEMPLOYED

To provide a more meaningful picture of the unemployment problem as it relates to women in Alaska, it is necessary to go beyond broad industry and occupational data and examine the age characteristics of unemployed women. Table 6 indicates that persons 16–24 years comprise the largest group of unemployed for both men and women. As a sub-group of this age bracket, teenage unemployment was 13.3 percent in 1979.9/ Fifty-nine percent were unemployed less than 5 weeks, 45 percent were females. Fewer women and men are unemployed in the 25 to 44 year group, however, the duration of unemployment increases. Twenty-eight percent of women between ages 25–44 years had at least 15 weeks of unemployment compared to 15 percent of women between 16–24 years of age. Women 45–64 years comprise the smallest group of unemployed. Over one-half have durations of unemployment under 5 weeks.

TABLE 6.

Duration of Unemployment* By Age and Sex, 1976
For Alaska

	Vert.%	Total	Women	Men	Women%	Men%	Women Vert.%	Men Vert.%
16–24 yrs.								
Less than 5 wks.	59	4,900	2,200	2,700	45	55	65	55
5–14 wks.	23	1,900	700	1,200	37	63	21	24
15 wks & over	18	1,500	500	100	66	33	15	20
25–44 yrs.								
Less than 5 wks.	48	2,300	900	1,400	39	61	43	52
5–14 wks.	27	1,300	600	700	46	54	29	26
15 wks. & over	25	1,200	600	600	50	50	28	22
45–64 yrs.								
Less than 5 wks.	39	700	300	400	43	57	60	31
5 to 14 wks.	33	600	100	500	17	83	20	38
15 wks. & over	28	500	100	400	20	80	20	31

* Duration of unemployment represents the length of time during which persons classified as unemployed had been continuously looking for work.

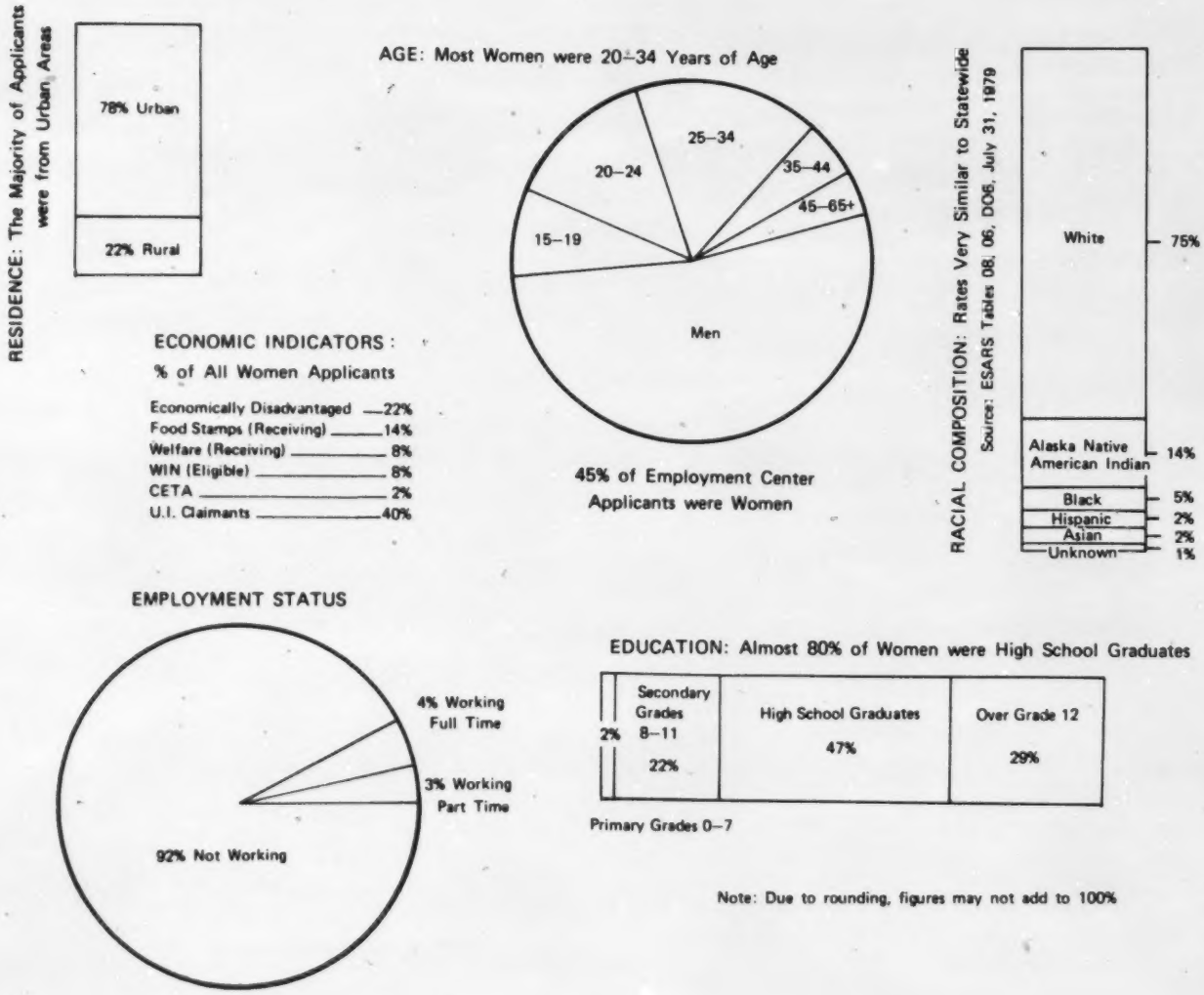
Source: Selected Socio-economic Indicators from the Survey of Income and Education, 1976, U.S. Department of Labor.

9/ U. S. Department of Labor Press Release, Number 80-92 derived from the Current Population Survey.

CHARACTERISTICS OF JOB SEEKERS

Another source of information on unemployed women is available through a study of Job Service applicants (see Figure 12). This information is useful in characterizing applicants but is not totally descriptive of all unemployed women in Alaska. Many job seekers do not utilize Job Service to find employment; this is especially true for professionals and union members. Economically disadvantaged women may be somewhat over-represented in job service data since many public assistance programs require work registration before receiving benefits. Figure 12 shows that only forty percent of all women job applicants were eligible for unemployment benefits (U.I.). To be eligible for UI an individual must have had prior earnings in recent paid employment (new entrants or re-entrants to the labor market may not meet monetary eligibility requirements).

FIGURE 12
CHARACTERISTICS OF WOMEN SEEKING EMPLOYMENT THROUGH JOB SERVICE OCTOBER 1, 1978 – JULY 31, 1979



Note: Due to rounding, figures may not add to 100%

Job Service data for July 1979, generally agrees with national trends and the characteristics presented in the Survey of Income and Education. Women who utilize Job Service are generally 20–34 years of age. Most are high school graduates and are white. Four percent of the women who have applied through Job Service are employed full time and 3 percent are employed part time.

Similar demographic characteristics appear to be shared by men who use Job Service (although more men are eligible for unemployment benefits – 60 percent). Men and women are proportionately distributed with regard to being economically disadvantaged, however, fewer men are involved in public service employment programs such as CETA or WIN.

The targeted nature of Job Service is helpful in obtaining some information about women who head households. According to the Survey of Income and Education, 9,000 Alaskan families were headed by women in 1976. As of July 1979, Job Service had an applicant load of 2,500 women who were eligible for WIN, a program for AFDC recipients. Although no specific conclusions can be made about all women, it is likely that many women who head households are economically disadvantaged as was previously discussed in the section on families (p. 8).

INROADS TO THE WORK FORCE

The pace of entry into the work force has been vigorous for women; although for some, opportunities of finding meaningful and gainful employment have been more limited due to the added responsibilities associated with being a single parent, a widow, and/or a displaced homemaker. According to the Survey of Income and Education, the primary reason women cited for not working outside the home was "home responsibilities." This is understandable in view of the high cost of daycare, the limited number of part time jobs available and lower wages associated with non-career occupations. Few employer groups in Alaska, with the exception of the federal government, have any policies regarding job sharing or permanent part-time positions at above poverty wage rates.

The federal government has attempted to remedy part of the problem through the development of special employment programs directed towards the economically disadvantaged, The following is a discussion of three programs (WIN, CETA, Senior Employment Program) that zero in on economically disadvantaged women who are single parents or who are displaced homemakers. However, due to qualifying income stipulations, many women will continue to be excluded from the scope of these employment assistance programs.

W.I.N.

The Work Incentive Program (WIN) provides employment to persons who are eligible for Aid to Families with Dependent Children, a group which is predominated by women who head families. WIN is presently available only in Juneau, Ketchikan, Sitka, and Anchorage. All positions are placed in the private sector. Women work most often in clerical, sales, and service occupations although some advancement into semi-skilled and skilled blue collar trades and technical fields is occurring. Wage rates range from $3.50 to $9.00 depending upon the industry and occupation. The average hourly wage for WIN employees was $5.20 per hour as of August, 1979. This is the highest in the nation, however, after adjusting for cost of living differentials its significance is somewhat diminished.

Participation in the program has steadily increased since 1975. Presently 2,200 women are active in the program as compared to 1,500 in 1975. The retention rate is the best in the nation. According to an ongoing survey conducted by the Department of Labor, 75 percent are still active on the job after a year.

C.E.T.A.

The Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA) is another federal program which provides subsidized employment and training opportunities for the economically disadvantaged and other groups, such as the displaced homemaker. It has been estimated by the U.S. Department of Labor that about 2,000 displaced homemakers are presently eligible for CETA programs in Alaska.[10/]

Although information is not tabulated by CETA to verify actual placement of this group in employment, it may be noted that 30 percent of all people hired are women and of these about one-half are AFDC recipients. These proportions also hold true for training.

CETA provides a valuable service in obtaining initial employment and training, however, there are specific limitations which impede continuous employment for women. Employment has a maximum duration of seventy-eight weeks, at which time the employee is terminated from CETA. One intent of CETA is to provide employees with valuable on-the-job experience in hopes that they will be hired by their present employers or in related work. However, only 20 percent enter employment after termination.[11/] Various reasons may affect this low percentage. Many jobs created by CETA have no funding capabilities outside of CETA. In small communities where jobs are scarce, special difficulties arise since there is little opportunity to be hired into jobs which will utilize acquired skills or even find other related jobs.

SENIOR EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

The Senior Employment Program addresses the employment needs of a special group of people who are at least 55 years of age and are economically disadvantaged. Many displaced homemakers fall into this category. The program provides only part time employment in non-profit and governmental organizations with many of the jobs in the clerical or service industries. Unlike CETA, there is no maximum duration placed on employment, although attempts are made to encourage employers to hire such workers.

Although small, this program has grown dramatically since 1977. Over one hundred people are presently employed as compared to seventeen in 1977. Many more are eligible statewide, however, due to funding constraints the program has remained small. Women represent over 50 percent of those employed and of these women about one-half are Alaskan Natives.

Wages average about $5.45 per hour. Because employees are not permitted to work over 20 hours in a given week their maximum gross weekly earnings would not exceed $110.00 For those persons who are receiving Social Security or retirement benefits the additional earnings provide an added cushion. Many women who are displaced homemakers, however, are in a precarious situation with such a limited income. Although data is not gathered by marital status, the Director of the Senior Employment Program noted that many of the women who participate in this program are displaced homemakers.

10/ U. S. Department of Labor, CETA Bulletin No. 58-79.

11/ State of Alaska, Department of Community and Regional Affairs, CETA Division, August 1979.

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

Various agencies are available to offer employment assistance to women in Alaska. The following is a partial list of agencies which provide testing, job referrals and career planning. Also listed is a contact agency for persons who feel they have been discriminated against in their jobs.

Job Service Centers – located in most urban centers offer employment counseling; information and referral on special employment programs such as CETA, OJT, WIN; job referrals; interest and aptitude testing.

Women's Resource Center, 602 W. 10th Ave., Anchorage, 99501. Phone: 278–9047. Displaced homemaker program, counseling, information and referral services in legal aid and job hunting and many other services.

Alaska Office of Volunteer Services, McKay Building, 338 Denali, Room 710, Anchorage, 99501. Phone 274–6223. Referral service to voluntary opportunities in Alaska.

Senior Community Service Employment Program, Office on Aging, Pouch H01C, Juneau Alaska 99811. Contact: Eileen Rehwald. Phone 465–4903. Employment opportunities for people over 55 years of age with lower incomes.

Educational Opportunity Center, University of Alaska. 2533 Providence Drive, Anchorage, 99504. Phone 263–1525. Professional career planning, interest and aptitude testing, employment referral services, job hunting skills training, financial aid information, post-secondary training.

Work Incentive Program (WIN), Alaska Department of Health & Social Services, 527 E. 5th, Anchorage, 99501. Phone 274–8576 or Alaska Office Building, Room 425, Pouch H, Juneau, 99801; Phone 465–3227. Employment program aimed at employing people on Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC).

U.S. Small Business Administration, 1016 W. 6th Avenue, Anchorage, 99501. Phone 271–4022. Information for small businesses.

United States Civil Service Employment, 701 C, Anchorage. Phone 271–5821 or 705 W. 9th Juneau, Zenith 1600. Employment listings in federal government.

Human Rights Commission, 204 E 5th Avenue, Anchorage. Phone 274–4692 or Room No. 505, Goldstein Building, on Seward Street. (Pouch AH) Juneau, 99811. Phone 465–3560. Investigates allegations of discrimination in employment, housing public accommodations, government services, and financial practices.

Women in the Labor Force

	Alaska			U. S.	
Year	Labor Force	Civilian Labor Force	Year	Labor Force[2/]	Civilian Labor Force
1950.....	36.8%	36.6%	1950	33.9%	33.9%
1960.....	39.6	39.3	1960	37.7	35.6
1970.....	46.2	45.3	1970	41.4	41.3
1977.....		57.1[1/]	1977	43.3[3/]	48.4[3/]
1978.....		62.4[1/]	1978	50.1[3/]	49.9[3/]

U.S. Census Detailed Characteristics 1950, page 51-19—Table 15.

1960 p. 159, Table 115
p. 163, Table 116

1970 p. 3—268, Table 164
p. 3—273, Table 165

U. S. Summary 1960 page 487, Table 194.
U. S. Summary 1970 page 679, Table 215.

1/ Data from BLS Current Population Survey.

2/ U. S. Working Women: A Databook; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1977, page 5.

3/ U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics; Employment and Earnings.